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RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1556
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 4335
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 3550
RUEHNEH/AMCONSUL HYDERABAD 0288
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1949
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 5805
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 2399
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 9335
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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: PAKISTAN, NEW ADMINISTRATION'S
FOREIGN POLICY, INDO-U.S. RELATIONS; NEW DELHI.

This countrywide cable reports on relevant media
reaction/opinion from India's large non-English press.
The Mission reports on English-language media via email
through the daily "Early Edition" summary.

PAKISTAN

¶1. "DEFEAT IN SWAT," editorial in the February 18
centrist NAVBHARAT TIMES Hindi daily: "Not even a week
has passed since Pakistani president Asif Ali Zardari
admitted that the Taliban has established sway over large
parts of his country and aims to take it over entirely.
Now we hear that Islamabad has concluded a peace deal
with the Taliban in the Swat valley. Zardari previously
said the offensive against the Taliban in Swat was not at
anyone's command, but rather in Pakistan's own national
interest. So is this peace deal with the Taliban a part
of the Pakistani government's offensive? What will Mr.
Zardari call it? U.S. Special Representative for Pakistan
and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke on Monday said India,
the United States and Pakistan all faced a common enemy.
After this Pakistani action of giving in to the Taliban,
will Mr. Holbrooke still maintain his view? Making peace
with the Taliban is a dangerous development, not only for
Zardari and Pakistan, but also India, South Asia, America
and indeed the world."

¶2. "HOLBROOKE'S ADVICE," editorial in the February 18
right-of-center AMAR UJALA Hindi daily: "Obama had grand

plans to focus his energies on Afghanistan. Now he probably realizes the complexities in actually implementing his plans. Soon after assuming power, he sent special representative for Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke to the region. Holbrooke said India, the US and Pakistan all have a common threat now: an enemy which poses a direct threat to our leadership, people and capitals. It is clear that Holbrooke is not aware of the reality, because while he is saying the Taliban is Pakistan's enemy, Zardari goes extending an olive branch to them. Islamabad has concluded a peace deal with the Taliban in the Swat valley. Islamabad is very clearly hoodwinking the United States. Holbrooke's thinking that Pakistan is on the same side as India and the U.S. shows that Pakistan has been able to throw dust in his eyes. Only Pakistan can deal with the Taliban, because it is Pakistan's creation."

13. "PAK ON THE WRONG TRACK," editorial in the February 18 right-of-center DAINIK JAGRAN Hindi daily: "Pakistan has been totally uncooperative and dishonest on the Mumbai terror dossier. It is necessary for India to move swiftly to tame Pakistan, because there is no other way. The world knows that the Pakistani coalition government has lost control over large parts of the country and that the Taliban has established its sway and aims to take it over entirely. Despite this, the Pakistan government has succeeded in convincing the world that it is a legitimate government that is firmly in the saddle. It is India's duty to expose Pakistan's duplicity to the world, because

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on its own the world is not able to comprehend its game plan. If American policymakers think that the danger is only from the Taliban, then they are mistaken."

NEW ADMINISTRATION'S FOREIGN POLICY

14. "RELEASE OF DETAINEES: OBAMA'S FOREMOST CHALLENGE," editorial-page article in the February 19 independent Kolkata Bengali daily, ANANDABAZAR PATRIKA by columnist Pradip Dutta. "America has pursued a war on terror chiefly with the help of its military power. That cornered terrorists to some extent but they are yet to be eliminated. Terrorist attacks have rather spread to other countries. The country whose President was attacked by a shoe-throwing Iraqi journalist will have to secure the confidence of the whole world, including that of Islamic nations. It will have to stop aggressive military interference in other countries. This has become the U.S. habit over the past six decades --almost like a drug addiction. It reached its climax during Bush's regime... though recent surveys suggest U.S. perceptions of African Americans have improved, whether the Muslims are placed in that category remains to be seen. One fears they may be converted into the 'New Black'. The new Administration faces huge challenges. Obama has even referred to the rights of nonbelievers; we are not bothered about the rights of atheists, but Obama thinks about it. It seems no problem evades his attention. There lies the hope. Now, action is needed."

INDO-U.S. RELATIONS

15. "LOVE FOR ISRAEL UNDER U.S. PRESSURE," editorial in the February 19 CPI (M) Bengali Organ GANASHAKTI, Kolkata. "Despite Leftist opposition, the UPA government in Delhi like the former NDA government is committed to building closer and stronger defense ties with Israel. Israel's role is going to assume a new dimension in the evolving paradigm of U.S. dominance aimed at counterbalancing China in Asia. India will become a new

active U.S. ally in the region. Israel is being positioned in the middle in order to steer strategic plans and keep the Indo-U.S. alliance hidden as far as possible. The more India gets closer to the U.S. the more the danger from terrorism increases. That escalates India's defense budget. The government has become so desperate to award arms contracts to Israel that it does not hesitate to flout all established norms... this is the result of getting trapped by the U.S."

MULFORD